

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00465 052352Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1201
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
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UNCLAS QUEBEC 0465

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA
SUBJECT: TRUDEAU MEETS WITH LEVESQUE IN QUEBEC CITY

REF: QUEBEC 446

1. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU MET WITH RENE LEVESQUE IN QUEBEC CITY FRIDAY (DEC.2), THE FIRST MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO ON LEVESQUE'S HOME TURF SINCE THE PQ ELECTION VICTORY IN 1976

THE TWO MET PRIVATELY IN LEVESQUE'S OFFICE FOR OVER TWO HOURS, AND LUNCED TOGETHER AFTERWARDS. IN SEPARATE AFTERNOON PRESS CONFERENCES BOTH TRUDEAU AND LEVESQUE CHARACTERIZED THEIR MEETING AS "WARM" AND "FRUITFUL" ALTHOUGH THEY WERE SHORT ON SPECIFICS, THEY SAID THAT DISCUSSIONS CENTERED PRIMARILY ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, AN AREA IN WHICH THE PQ GOVERNMENT HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY IN RECENT WEEKS TO PRAISE FEDERAL INITIATIVES. LEVESQUE ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD ATTEND TRUDEAU'S FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ECONOMY WHICH IS PLANNED FOR JANUARY. LEVESQUE, WHOSE ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE RELIES IN IMPORTANT PART ON FEDERAL FUNDS, COMMENTED THAT HE WAS PLEASED THAT THE FEDERAL AND THE QUEBEC GOVERNMENTS, "WHILE FOLLOWING SEPARATE PATHS, HAD COME TO THE SAME CONCLUS-
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IONS ON ECONOMIC MATTERS."

2. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES WERE ALSO DISCUSSED. TRUDEAU APPARENTLY OUTLINED HIS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM PROPOSALS TO LEVESQUE AS HE HAD TO OTHER PROVINCIAL PREMIERS ALTHOUGH NEITHER LEADER WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSALS WITH THE PRESS. LEVESQUE SOUNDED THE ONLY SHARP NOTE OF HIS PRESS

CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, WHEN HE WARNED TRUDEAU AGAINST MAKING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM THE ISSUE IN THE UPCOMING FEDERAL ELECTIONS. IN SUCH A CASE, LEVESQUE SAID, THE PQ COULD OPENLY INVOLVE ITSELF IN THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. HE DID NOT ELABORATE. LEVESQUE ALSO DISMISSED TRUDEAU'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS AS "PATCH-UP JOBS" BUT HE AVOIDED POLEMICS.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NO NEW GROUND APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BROKEN AT THE MEETING, THE CORDIALITY OF THE ATMOSPHERE WAS IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE TENSION AND VERBAL SNIPING THAT TOOK PLACE AT TRUDEAU'S MEETING WITH THEN-PREMIER BOURASSA LAST YEAR. ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, TRUDEAU AND LEVESQUE HAVE FOUND ROOM FOR AGREEMENT WHILE ON CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS, AS LEVESQUE HIMSELF PUT IT, THEY HAVE "AGREED TO DISAGREE."
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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